

THREE CREEKS #3 TIMBER SALE

August 18, 2008 Land Board

This project is the fourth of four timber sales proposed under the Three Creeks EIS.

Location of Sale:

- Swan Unit (NWLO) – Approximately 7 air miles south of Swan Lake, Montana
- Lake County – Sections 10, 22, 25, 27, T24N-R17W
- 100% Common School Trust.

Sale Volume & Estimated Value:

- The estimated volume is 34,114 tons (6,027 MBF) with an estimated minimum value of \$571,409.50 or \$16.75/ton.
- In addition to the stumpage value, a fee of \$4.82/ton for Forest Improvement will be charged for all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 5.66 tons/MBF is the estimated conversion factor.

Sale & Harvest Treatments:

- The sale consists of 7 harvest units totaling 460 acres.
- Silvicultural prescriptions include:
 - 117 acres of commercial thinning. Commercial thinning would leave 80 –110 trees per acre representing a variety of size and age classes.
 - 192 acres of shelterwood harvest. Shelterwood harvest would leave 12 – 16 trees per acre either singly or in small groups.
 - 126 acres of seed tree with reserves. Seed tree harvest with reserves would leave 6 – 8 trees per acre. The one reserve area is a small patch of timber within a specific unit that has not been harvested. The reserve area is 1.8 acres. This reserve patch provides a natural seed source, hiding cover for wildlife, and limit sight distances for grizzly bears as called for in the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement (SVGBCA).
 - The remaining 25 acres are road right-of-way clearing,
- A minimum of 2 large snags per acre would also be retained in each harvest unit. Western white pine, ponderosa pine, western larch, Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western red cedar would be favored for retention throughout the sale.
- This sale treats about 242 acres of old growth. Post-harvest, about 242 acres would still meet the department's definition of old growth.
- All regeneration (seed tree with reserve & shelterwood) and intermediate (commercial thinning) harvest treatments are meant to: address insect and disease issues; promote appropriate species composition and desired future conditions; and balance revenue recovery with environmental considerations such as wildlife habitat, watershed health, and soil stability.

Harvest Systems:

- 40% tractor
- 60% skyline

Road Construction:

- Approximately 3.6 miles of new road would be constructed, approximately 4.5 miles of existing road would be reconstructed and approximately 0.1 miles of road would be obliterated. An additional 15 miles of existing road would receive maintenance or spot improvements. After the sale, all forest roads used for this sale would meet current BMPs. Current open/closed road status would not change and all new roads would be closed to motorized use once the sale is completed. Traffic flow and road use were designed to meet the requirements of the SVGBCA.

Public Involvement:

The public involvement process for this sale have been addressed in the Three Creeks FEIS and discussed in the previous two Three Creeks timber sale agenda items.

The Department has conducted 3 public tours over the past 8 months on the Three Creeks Project. On Thursday, July 31, 2008 the most recent public tour was given of current operations taking place on the first phase of the Three Creeks timber sale project. The tour was designed to show participants ongoing operations, and to give them an opportunity to see whether we were performing work as described in the FEIS. Participants included: special interest groups, residents in the surrounding community, industry representatives, the purchaser of Sale #1, Land Board Staffers, and DNRC personnel. None of the participants voiced concerns over discrepancies between the FEIS and the ongoing operations.

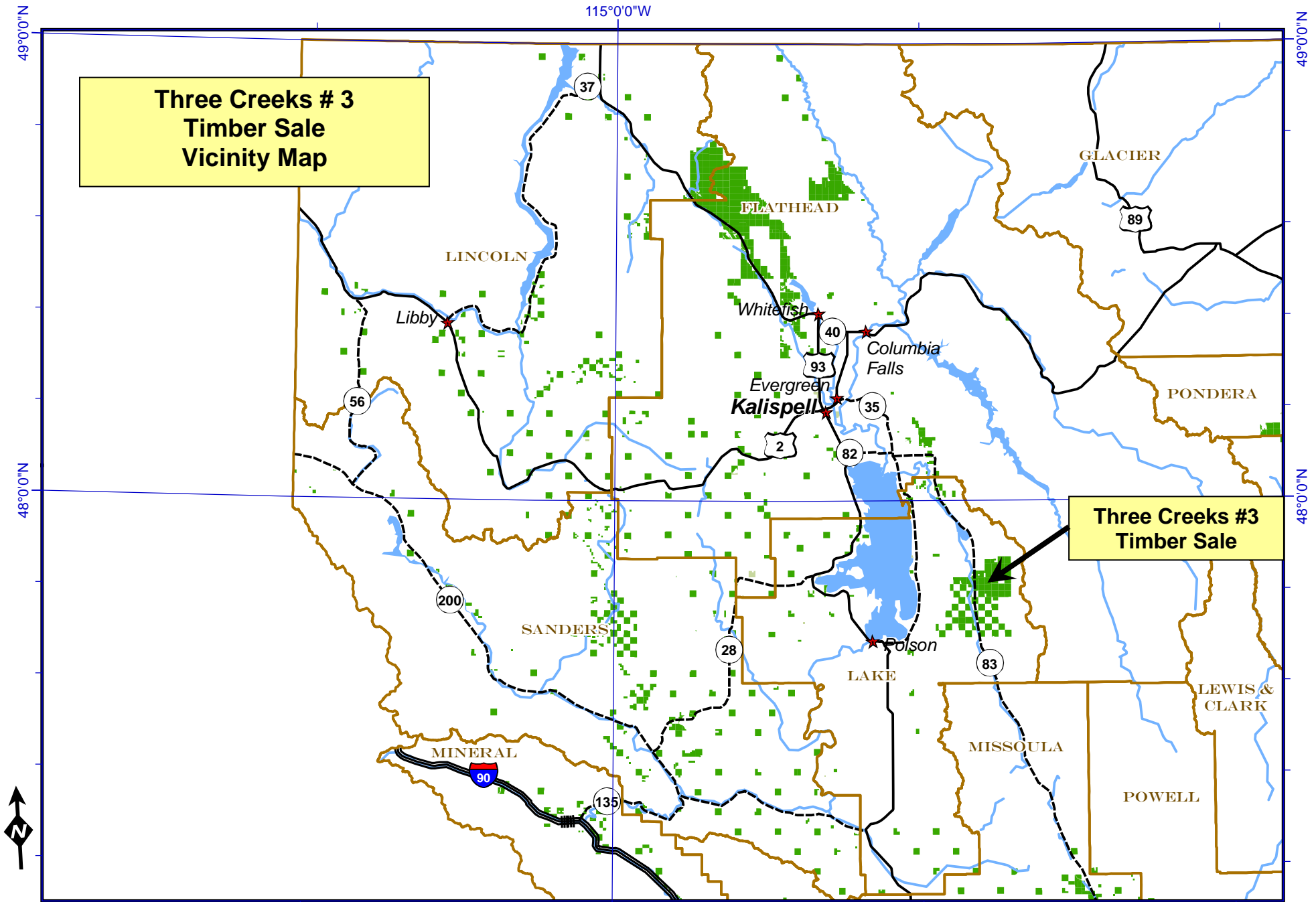
Issues and Mitigations:

The wildlife and endangered species issues and mitigations have also been addressed in the Three Creeks FEIS and prior timber sale agenda items.

- **Old Growth** – Timber management in old growth stands on this sale would concentrate on stands with chronic and widespread insect and disease problems. A total of 242 acres of old growth would be treated as a part of this second sale. All of those acres would still meet the department's definition of old growth post-harvest.

Many of the trees in these old growth stands are dead or dying as a result of insect and disease issues. In addition, many of the seral species are declining while shade tolerant species are increasing and moving away from desired future conditions (DFC's). Shelterwood and seed tree harvest treatments in these old growth stands correspond to old growth maintenance treatments (ARM 36.11.418) which are meant to emulate mixed severity fire regimes on these sites. These types of treatments are designed to reduce short and long-term insect and disease problems, increase the presence of seral species (western larch, western white pine, etc.) and reduce the amount of shade tolerant species such as grand fir, while balancing the value recovery of dead and dying trees with environmental considerations.

The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the Three Creeks #3 Timber Sale.

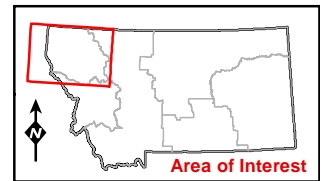


**Three Creeks # 3
Timber Sale
Vicinity Map**

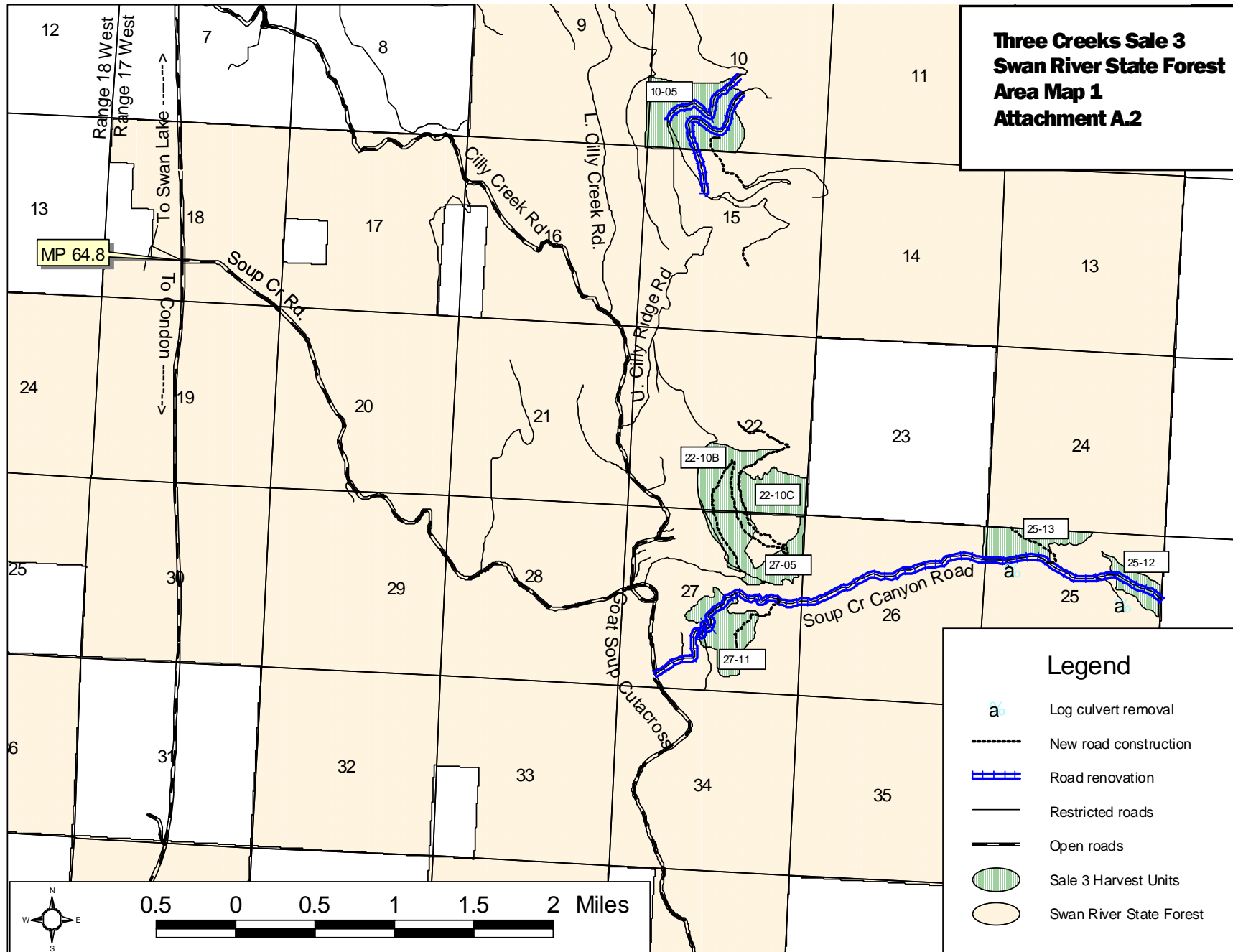
**Three Creeks #3
Timber Sale**

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|--|--------------------|--|--------|--|-------------------------|
| | Interstate Highway | | Rivers | | Lakes |
| | U.S. Route | | City | | DNRC managed for timber |
| | State Highway | | County | | DNRC other |

21 February 2007
Montana DNRC
Technical Services Section/dr



**Three Creeks Sale 3
Swan River State Forest
Area Map 1
Attachment A.2**



Legend

- a Log culvert removal
- New road construction
- ▬▬▬ Road renovation
- Restricted roads
- ▬▬▬ Open roads
- Sale 3 Harvest Units
- Swan River State Forest

